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A

SERIOUS ADDRESS

TO THE

PEOPLE OF ENGLAND,

ON THE SUBJECT OF

A REFORM,

AND THE

*Necessity of Zeal and Unanimity in Defence
of their Country.*

By JAMES JOHNSON, Esq.

“ We are not lost, if we continue firm.”

Pursuits of Literature.

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A

SERIOUS ADDRESS, &c.

A Friend to my country,* a friend to social order, and to our present civil and ecclesiastical polity, I cannot contemplate on the various events, which are now passing on the continent of Europe, particularly on that part of it, which is under the immediate controul of France, without feeling the most sensible pain. The great, the wonderful success, which has attended on her arms, and which consequently

* "I have loved my country from my earliest years, from a conviction of the excellence of the constitution, and of that balanced liberty, it was formed to maintain."

Pursuits of Literature.

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has

has spread all her mad and incoherent principles over the whole face of Europe, must have excited similar sensation in the breast of every true Englishman, at viewing in anticipation, in what manner this success will ultimately affect Great Britain.

We must be all sensible, with what artful cunning and singular industry, the principles of Liberty and Equality were drawn up, circulated, and maintained in every part of France, and in every other state, open to admit them, in order to secure partisans to their cause. Such new and fascinating doctrines, calculated to attract, and, by its power of attraction, to mislead the lower orders of the people, could not, in the natural course of their operation, but meet with many zealous advocates. In a large and populous state, there always exist men, and men not a few in number, who, discontented with their present condition, whatever that condition might be, and ambitious of raising themselves to an elevated point of distinction, are prepared to seize every favourable opportunity to alter that condition, and to lift themselves into notice. No moment more desirable could present itself, than when those
 revo-

revolutionary principles were first promulgated. It let loose upon society the greater part of its members; all the discontented, all the violent, and all the ambitious. Is it strange, then, that the French cause should have received so many sanguinary leaders, and been attended by such unparalleled success?

Intimately concerned as the people of this country are, from their local situation, in regard to whatever passes in France, and the line of conduct pursued by the government thereof, it required no depth of political knowledge, long ago to foresee, that the French revolution would, in its consequences, greatly affect the interests and the establishments of this kingdom: and, therefore, it undoubtedly became the wisdom of government, narrowly to watch the progress of it. This duty, we have every reason to believe, was discharged most faithfully. We have every reason to believe also, for indeed it is, and has been repeatedly admitted by the French themselves, and of which, were it not so, we have undeniable proof from the evidence* and papers of Lord

* Lately delivered in the House of Lords in the course of debate.

Auckland, that the war was entered into, not intemperately and rashly, not from any premeditation or desire, on the part of our Government, which, on the contrary, exerted itself to avert the threatened calamity, in a manner, very laudable in my opinion, though it has been censured for having carried its pacific wishes farther, than the dignity of the state demanded; but was entered into by the unjust aggression, by the insatiable ambition, by the artful projects of France herself; who, rejecting with lofty disdain all advances to negotiation, resolved to make war *politically*, in order to consolidate and establish her favourite republic.

The war, therefore, certainly was, on our part, inevitable,* and so far just and necessary; and though success has not always crowned our efforts in the conduct of it upon land, yet upon our natural element, the ocean, the glory of the British arms never shone, I will not say with

* “ The most ardent wish of my heart is a *secure peace*, after a war, for ever to be deplored, bloody, fatal, and expensive beyond all example; but which I always believed, and still believe, to have been *inevitable*.”

superior, but with equal splendour and brilliancy.

Still, with all this, our naval success, considered it should be, that the war cannot be supported without an enormous expence. The national debt, already incurred, is felt by the public to be most oppressive. The weight of taxes, at present imposed, cramps the industry, and bends the spirit of the nation. Great and uncommon exertion, it is admitted on all sides, is still necessary. The object at stake is important: no less than our existence, as an independent nation. Whilst the spirit, which fills the bosom of our enemy, displays itself, on every possible occasion, in acts of the most inveterate hatred. The times, therefore, it may be truly said, are serious and critical; and require, in the conduct of our government, the utmost caution, and the most temperate firmness.

But, in addition to the many important affairs, which already engage the attention of Ministry, a great desire has lately been manifested to bring forwards, for parliamentary discussion, the subject of a *radical reform*, as the only preservative of the state. When the people were lately called upon to raise the supplies

for the support of the war, supplies, it is not to be denied, very great, but, at the same time, indispensable, and of the war, which a great majority of the people had already declared, by the voice of their representatives, to be just and necessary, every impediment was thrown in the way, apparently with the view of embarrassing ministers, and, in the moment of their embarrassment, to supplant them. A *radical reform* was called for. A *radical reform* was declared necessary to be immediately brought forward to prop the falling state.

“ In a constitution, so very complicated as that of England, it must necessarily suffer alterations from time.”* A reform, therefore, undoubtedly is much to be desired, to repair the dilapidations, which the hand of time has made. But the reform, which every good man, and honest patriot, would recommend at the present moment, is of a moral, as well as of a political nature.

With respect to a reform of Government, he would wish to express no desire of *change* in the present established constitution of this Coun-

* Goldsmith's History of England.—George the first.

try, but only a *correction of abuses*, existing in the several departments thereof.

Much pains have been taken, I am sorry to say it, by people, who call themselves friends of Government, to blend and confound the meaning of *reformer* and *revolutionist*. Yet surely the import of these two words is widely different. A *correction of abuses*, certainly, does not imply a *total change and overthrow* of the constitution. A man may be an advocate for the former, and yet avow hostility to the latter, without forfeiting his claim to consistency. I would wish to see the power of the state renovated by undergoing a *reform*, but not the smallest *change* whatever take place in our political establishment.

In the present embarrassed state of our finances, under the present heavy load of taxes, tending almost to inspire despondency, and to unnerve the arm of industry amidst the middle ranks of life, the necessity must appear of a general retrenchment, as well in the several departments of Administration, as in private expenditure. Let patent places, superfluous offices, and sinecures be annihilated. Let the long list of gentlemen pensioners be revised and amended; and

none allowed to receive an annual salary from the state, who has not a claim on its gratitude, as the reward, either of some useful discovery, or of some national service. It would afford me no small pleasure also to see, under our present pecuniary difficulties, Ministry themselves, who annually receive large sums, to which I do not mean to affirm, that they are not justly entitled, as a compensation for their services to the state; men, who, like the Duke of Portland, possess immense private property, more than sufficient to support their domestic establishments with becoming dignity, come forward, and make, in the true spirit of patriotism, a voluntary surrender of all their official emoluments to the national service. Let them stand forth in this generous and disinterested manner, and serve the nation without fee or reward. Such noble conduct, such gratuitous service, would speak a language more forcible, and raise the public spirit more sensibly, in support of the war, than all the political pamphlets, and all the declamatory speeches, which have issued from the press for that purpose, during the course of the last five years.

And as the present war is continued, avowedly

edly for the protection of property, let men of fortune advance foremost in the list, and sacrifice, voluntarily and cheerfully, on the altar of their country a part thereof, to ensure the preservation of the remainder.

By pursuing such a line of conduct as this, which I have chalked out, the spirit of discontent, and disaffection, becoming now, it is to be lamented, so general, will subside. It will convince the people, of what at present they deny, that the rich are really desirous of bearing their share of the public burden. It will convince the enemy, that we are in earnest, that we are actuated by the purest love of our Country, and will not shrink from discharging the incumbent duties to it, when the national welfare demands it of us. It will tend to communicate an emulous spirit of Patriotism to all ranks and degrees in life, and will prompt, even the inferior members of the state, to make the war a common cause.

A reform upon so small a scale as this, a reform of abuses only, in the various offices of Administration, and a reformed line of conduct in the great and affluent, may and should be effected instantly, without a moment's delay;
and

and will be attended by the most beneficial consequences.

But with regard to the propriety of an *immediate parliamentary reform*, which has lately been so much the subject of conversation, I cannot say, that I consider the public mind, at this moment, sufficiently tranquil, to enter upon the discussion of it. A time of war, and of such a war as the present, which threatens to involve in its consequences the existence of this nation, is a very unfit period to agitate a question of such moment. And very censurable, in my opinion, is the advice of those, who recommend, that a general and radical reform in every department of the state should be instantly and immediately adopted.

Sudden and great changes are dangerous, as well to the body politic, as to the body natural. A reform of such an extent, comprehending a variety of distinct, separate, and important subjects, should be effected gradually, step by step; should be effected, not hastily and rashly, but coolly and deliberately, and with the most circumspect caution: lest the factious should endeavour to excite, and take advantage of popular commotion, and plunge the nation
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unexpectedly into all the horrors of a revolution. For most justly has it been observed, that “ no factions ever proceeded to attempt a *revolution* in any country, but first under the pretence, and through the medium of a *reform*.” *

But whenever the happy and proper moment shall arrive of reforming parliament, I would wish to see, what are called the close boroughs, laid open, and the right of election committed to all their inhabitants, under certain regulations. I would wish to see the number of representatives proportioned to the population of each borough, and the number of county members increased; because from the wide extent of a county, and the numerous body of its electors, there is less danger of corruption and undue influence.

Much has been said, and much will be said, whenever the question is seriously debated, in favour of annual parliaments.† But surely it cannot

* Pursuits of Literature.

† “ Annual parliaments was our ancient constitution.”

“ Frequent parliaments are coeval with the constitution. In the reign of Edward III. it was enacted, that parliaments should be

cannot be denied, that one great and incontrovertible objection against this measure is, that it will be productive of great inconvenience to the state, and prove the source of constant divisions and animosities among the electors. The old practice of returning a new parliament at the expiration of every three years, agreeably to the Triennial act, made in the reign of King William, "in the midst of his difficulties," seems to be the happy medium, desirable to be adopted between the two extremes. And the infringement of this practice, by passing an act prolonging their duration to seven years, unquestionably was, in the parliament of George I. a flagrant infringement of the first principles of justice, and the constitution;*

and

be holden every year once, and oftener, if need be. This must be understood of new parliaments; for prorogations and long adjournments were not then known."—*Bellsham's Memoirs of the Kings of Great Britain*, vol. i. p. 124, 126. *Speech of Sir Robert Raymond, afterwards Lord Raymond, and Chief Justice of England.*

* "The members of this assembly were chosen under the Triennial act. Our trust is, therefore, a Triennial trust, and if we extend it beyond the strict legal duration, we cease from that instant to be the trustees of the people, and are our own electors.

From

and a violent assumption of power, by no means delegated to them by the people. “ If it was right, says Goldsmith,* to extend their duration to seven years, they might also perpetuate their authority; and thus cut off even the shadow of nomination.”

The right of voting also will require regulation. Respect ought to be paid to property, in

From that instant, we act by an unwarrantable assumption of power, and take upon us to create a new constitution.”

Belsham's Mem. vol. i. p. 121. Speech of Mr. Shippen.

“ In my opinion, with great submission I speak it, King, Lords, and Commons can no more continue a parliament beyond its natural duration, than they can make a parliament.”

Belsham's Mem. vol. i. p. 127. Speech of Sir R. Raymond.

* History of England, George I.

“ A long parliament will encourage every species of corruption in every class of the community. The value of a seat will bear a determinate proportion to the legal duration of parliaments, and the purchase will rise accordingly. A long parliament will both enhance the temptations, and multiply the opportunities of a vicious ministry, to undermine the integrity and independency of parliaments, far beyond what could occur, if they were short and frequent. The reasons, urged for prolonging the duration of this parliament to seven years, will probably be as strong, and, by perseverance in the same impolitic conduct, might be made much stronger before the end of that term, for continuing and ever perpetuating their legislative power.

Belsham's Mem. vol. i. p. 118. Speech of the Earl of Nottingham.

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such a manner as to make a small portion of it the basis of the right.—But on a subject so interesting to every man in this kingdom, there must of necessity arise various, and perhaps, contradictory opinions: and it will require the collected wisdom of the whole nation justly and prudently to settle and determine it.

An attentive observer may, at the present moment, perceive in this kingdom the discordant sentiments of three parties: distinguishable by the denomination of the Court Party, which rejects without distinction all reform; of the Moderate Party, a party sincerely attached to the constitution, as at present established, but extremely desirous of a reform, meaning thereby a correction of abuses in every department of the state, entertaining at the same time various opinions, respecting the most proper mode and period of effecting it; and of the Republican Party; for that such a party did exist in the heart of this kingdom, was proved, at the late state trials, to the conviction of every impartial mind; and we are now occasional witnesses of its struggles to disengage itself from the fetters, by which the wisdom of parliament has thought proper to bind it.

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The first party includes every man, who is dependant on, or connected with the present Administration. The second contains the great body of the people. The last is composed of but few members; but among those few, may be named some men of shining talents. However, this party is not, at the present moment, so formidable from its activity, as it was three or four years ago.

The court party, having all civil and military power vested in its hands, must consequently possess great strength and influence: and, being dependent on, or connected with the present Administration, has an interest in continuing the existing abuses. Is it at all strange, therefore, that it should reject indiscriminately all reform; that it should endeavour to confound the *reformer* and the *innovator*; and should roundly assert, that a *reformation* will as naturally produce a *revolution*, as the effect will follow the cause?

The moderate party, on the contrary, is influenced by no motive, but the good of its country. Having not the film of interest before its eyes, it is capable of forming an impartial judgment: and, after exercising that capability,

lity, is of opinion, that a temperate reform in every department of the state will tend to avert that calamity, so much dreaded by them both; that it will tend to check, if not totally destroy, the deleterious poison, disseminated with so much industry by republicans and levellers, the common enemy of both; and who endeavour by their talents and activity to supply their want of number. Such was the opinion also of the late Earl of Chatham, to whom the public has been accustomed to look with so much deference. Such was the opinion also of his Son, and of the Duke of Richmond, before one was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the other Master General of the Ordinance.

Such changes of opinion, fluctuating as men are in, or out of place, certainly do not tend to create confidence in Administration, or to reconcile the people to its abuses. They never saw so clearly the corrupt manner, in which the secret springs of Government are put into motion, and the absolute necessity of a general reform. With what propriety, with what consistency, can the House of Commons be called a representation of the people, when we all know, that not one tenth part of the people are represented

sented at all, but by the figure synecdoche, putting a part for the whole? Affirmed it has been, and repeatedly affirmed in both houses, that Peers have interfered at elections; that Peers have assumed the right of nominating members. Had there been no foundation for such an assertion, one would suppose, that the two houses would not silently have heard it affirmed in their very faces. And if there is truth in it, to what a ridiculous farce and mockery is the right of representation reduced?

The necessity of a Parliamentary reform, therefore, as well as a reform in the Civil offices of Government, cannot by disinterested people be denied. The only difference of opinion existing between them, is, as to the most proper time and mode of effecting it. My reasons I have already assigned for thinking a time of war, and of such a war as the present, and at a juncture so critical, a very unfit moment for bringing the subject under legislative discussion. The man, who has the good of his country at heart, would not desire, from party or interested motives, to embarrass Ministers, and retard the business of the state, by promoting a measure, which he must be conscious, will

tend to create difference of opinion and discord among the people.

Quietly and calmly, therefore, let us wait, until the sword of war be sheathed, and the hand of peace shall wave her olive branch; until the wisdom of the legislature shall be able to apply that serious and close attention to the subject, which its importance justly deserves. Some definitive assurance, however, on the part of Ministry, of future support to the measure, on the return of peace, would be very acceptable to the people. It would contribute to allay, in some degree, the prevailing spirit of discontent, and would induce them to submit, with patient resignation, to the heavy burdens imposed on them, cheered by the beams of hope.

With respect to the House of Lords, I shall only observe, that well-pleased would every patriot feel, to see the peerage made the reward of eminent services to the nation, not used as a political engine to manage public business.

After a Parliamentary reform, and a correction of abuses in the Civil offices of Government, the next grand department which strikes our view as meriting a reform, is our Ecclesiastical establishment; both on account of the notorious

torious abuses existing therein, and on account of its great importance in the state. So close and intimate indeed, is the connection between our present Civil and Ecclesiastical establishments, both as revised, improved, and confirmed at different periods of our history, that no considerable change can be effected in one, without sapping the foundation of the other.

With respect to the abuses in this department, much is it to be lamented, that whilst it possesses such abundant revenues, more than sufficient, if duly apportioned, to supply all its ministers with the comforts of life, our eyes should behold in every part of the kingdom, between Clergymen of equal learning, equal ability, and equal character, such great disparity in their annual income. On whatever side we direct our view, we see some enjoying all the superfluities and luxuries which an excessive revenue affords; whilst others, many of whom are more meritorious, with the utmost industry, and the most rigid frugality, can hardly obtain the common necessities of life.

This wide difference in the condition of the established Clergy, for the comfortable maintenance of whom ample provision is made by the

state, strikes the mind of every beholder. A more equal distribution of Church Livings, it is universally admitted by all disinterested people, is now become necessary. Why, it has been asked, and justly asked, should one man, and that man perhaps a bachelor, with no superior pretensions, receive the emoluments of two, three, four, five, or more different benefices, to the annual amount of six, seven, eight, nine hundred, or one thousand pounds, or perhaps more, whilst the income of another, who is probably a more deserving and a married man incumbered with a numerous family, does not exceed fifty? No answer is given to this question, but that it is an abuse, and deserves correction. But how is this abuse to be corrected? By the interference of the legislature. The legislature has lately meliorated the condition of the inferior clergy, by vesting in the bishops a discretionary power to increase their annual stipend. It is true, an act of parliament has lately passed, delegating to the bishops such a power as that mentioned, upon an application for the exercise of it. But has the intention of the legislature, in respect to this augmentation, been fulfilled by their Lordships in any single instance? Does not the act of Parliament lie, at
this

this moment, in a dormant state, neglected, and even already hardly known? Will it be discreet in the inferior Clergy, individually to petition, each his Dioceſan, to order for him an increaſe of ſtipend? Will not ſuch conduct ſubject them to the odious appellation of the diſcontented and troubleſome? Will it not alſo expoſe them to the danger of being diſmiſſed from their curacies? Will any other of the beneficed Clergy be deſirous of employing them, after their character is thus ſtamped with ignominy? The natural conſequence flowing from ſuch an exerciſe of their juſt right, would be their reduction to the loweſt ſtate of indigence.

It grieves me much to obſerve the great illiberality, which is every where viſible in the allowance of the beneficed Clergy to their Curates. The inferior Clergy are men, the greateſt part, or the whole of whoſe patrimony has been expended in their education, to qualify them for that ſtation, which they were deſigned to occupy in ſociety. The amount of their profeſſional income, therefore, forms the whole, or nearly the whole of their ſupport. And with this ſum, ſmall as it is, ſeldom exceeding forty or fifty pounds per annum in the aggregate, are

these useful and worthy men ordained to preserve the character of Gentlemen, and to fulfil as Clergymen the leading duties of charity and beneficence. The condition of the lowest mechanic, I will maintain, is superior. The poverty of Curates is become proverbial.

Arrived within the sacred threshold of the priesthood, they are prevented by express acts of parliament from pursuing, were they so disposed, any branch of trade. It has therefore been said, that they may augment the smallness of their income, by opening private schools for education. This, I am confident, many of them would be glad to do. But are there not public schools of great established credit, to which people are more desirous of sending their children, on account of its greater advantages? And are there not a number of private seminaries in every large town in the kingdom? And do not the Clergy, whenever an opportunity presents itself, in embracing which there is the smallest chance of success, endeavour to improve their condition by pursuing the recommendation proposed? Surely it can never be meant, that they should employ their time and talents in trudging through the alphabet with all the village children,

children, at the rate of twopence per week each, in which they may chance to reside. If such be the nature of the relief suggested, how much the feelings of their liberal minds will be wounded by such conduct, it is left for the liberal mind to conceive.

This smallness of allowance I consider to be one great cause of the low station, which most of the Clergy hold in the public mind, and of the mean and degrading actions, of which the necessities of many prompt them to be guilty. But to whom is blame imputable? Ill would it become me to bestow the smallest censure on the reverend bench of Prelates. But is it not publicly known, that to them is committed a discretionary power to redress the grievances, and meliorate the condition of Curates? And their neglecting to do so, seems to prove what has been strongly affirmed, that their Lordships are afraid, their interference will offend the body of beneficed Clergy. But are not Bishops the legal fathers, patrons, guardians, and protectors of their poor brethren? Surprised am I, greatly surprised, not to hear, that my Lord of Durham, that great disciplinarian, that worthy and exemplary Prelate, who never discovered merit without

rewarding it, has afforded to the lower clergy a leading instance of benevolence. From his minute attention to whatever relates to the welfare of the Church, I long since expected, that, in the diocese of Durham, he would have made a personal enquiry into the state of the Clergy, have conscientiously mediated between Incumbents and Curates, and obliged the former, whose livings would admit of it, to allow the latter, agreeably to the intention of Parliament, a more liberal stipend.

It will not, I hope, be deemed presumption, if I entreat the Reverend bench seriously to consider, and effectually to improve the condition of the inferior Clergy, at this critical juncture, when the necessaries of life are advanced to such a considerable price, when taxes are so numerous, and so oppressive, and when still more are daily and hourly imposed. If they feel a desire to support the dignity of their profession, and maintain their consequence in the state, the beneficed Clergy will, of themselves, without incurring the necessity of Episcopal interference, from a sense of interest as well as of duty, grant to Curates a more liberal allowance. They certainly are a very numerous,

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ous, and collectively, may perhaps be considered, in regard to parochial influence in the country, in some degree powerful, as well as a very useful body of men. I would not wish, therefore, to see their affections alienated from our ecclesiastical establishment, or the spirit of discontent among them longer to prevail. Grant them the comforts; they desire not the luxuries of life.

Should the bishops, however, not think proper, unless personally called upon, to interfere by virtue of the late act, I submit to the consideration of the inferior Clergy, whether it would not be prudent to assemble by public advertisement in the central town of each diocese, in order to petition in a body their respective Prelates. A meeting of this kind was advertised about eight months ago, to be holden at Andover, in the diocese of Winchester, for a similar purpose. But what was proposed, or executed at that meeting, I have never learnt. I am inclined to think, that nothing was determined; the curates, most probably, being afraid either to assemble, or if assembled, to speak their sentiments freely, through fear of giving offence to Incumbents,

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What I have said on the necessity of improving the condition of the inferior Clergy, will not, even if fully executed, amount to that measure of reform, which I deem expedient, and not at all hazardous to be adopted in their favour at the present eventful moment. I would wish to see a *complete* abolition of Pluralities; a law established, that no clergyman below the dignity of Dean, shall hold more than one benefice, exceeding the annual value of 250*l.* or 300*l.*; and that no church preferment shall, either directly or indirectly, in regard to immediate or future presentation, be bought or sold for money, or the equivalent of money. Much abuse prevails, at present, as to both these points: abuse, any instance of which it is needless to particularise, as the fact is notorious to the whole kingdom.

The legal allowance of Pluralities is the grand, the necessary, and obvious cause of poverty among the inferior Clergy, and requires an immediate reform. The various benefices, often enjoyed by one man,* would, divided as

* We have an instance of a Clergyman in the Clofe of Salisbury, who (though a bachelor) holds no less than *ten or more* different ecclesiastical offices.

they ought to be, bestow comfort and happiness upon six or eight worthy families, at present with difficulty obtaining the common necessities of life. The situation of some, indeed, is so deplorable, that I can with safety affirm, there are present in every diocese, at the visitation dinner, triennially given by the Bishops, many Clergymen, who would be glad to exchange situations with the servants who wait on them.*

The necessity of a reform, then, in this department cannot be denied. Nor do I conceive, that it will prove at all dangerous to the safety of the state, or embarrassing to the measures of Government, to enter upon the subject immediately. The nature of the reform, the abuse itself points out. And in order to commit no

* It much concerned me lately to read in the public papers, that a clergyman † in the north of Devon had been reduced to such poverty and distress, as to find it necessary to solicit the charitable contributions of his neighbours, in behalf of his wife and family. And to the great credit of the Bishop of Exeter, be it mentioned, that, as soon as it arrived to the knowledge of his lordship, having been satisfied in his inquiries into the truth of his distress and the goodness of his moral character, he presented him to the vicarage of Coleridge, near Chumleigh.

† Reverend John Ridd,

injustice

injustice to individuals, let those who are now in possession of Pluralities, or the purchased right of future presentations, be allowed the exercise of their right, and liberty of enjoying their Pluralities for their lives. So that the reform should operate only in regard to future presentations.

Much praise would attach to the Bishops, were they to reform the entrance into the Ministry: were they to observe greater circumspection, in admitting proper persons into the sacred office; better qualified with respect to their moral character, as well as their literary and theological knowledge. On their lordships, I know, that much imposition is at present practised by the beneficed Clergy, who grant the requisite testimonials from a principle of friendship, often from slight acquaintance only with candidates, rather than from sense of duty. They accustom themselves to think, that a testimonial is required only *pro formâ*, and not designed, as it undoubtedly is, as a check upon the admission of improper persons.

But notwithstanding all which has been advanced by many writers on the necessity of a reform in our Political and Ecclesiastical establishments,

blishments, there yet remains one department which merits a reform, more than any which has been mentioned, namely, the department of *religion* and *morality*.

The relaxed state of religion and morality among mankind, is the subject of serious concern to every reflecting mind. We can, all of us, declaim very fluently on the necessity of a Political reform, without considering, at the same time, on the universal profligacy and universal dissipation which prevails in every rank and station of life. It is not simply confined to the lower orders of the people. Those, who figure in the upper walks of life, and from whose superior education we reasonably expect better things, are leading characters in depravity. The want of connubial faith, in what is called fashionable circles, checked as it is by the laudable exertions of a great and worthy magistrate,* has long since filled our courts of justice with business, and our lawyers with bread. Gaming-houses and play-houses are attended, are crowded with our Nobility and Gentry, whilst the house of Prayer is almost deserted. Hu-

* Lord Kenyon.

man ingenuity is daily tortured to discover some additional luxury, some additional gratification for the lovers of pleasure; whilst the luxury of doing good, and the gratification of a conscious and upright mind are left to the quiet enjoyment of the very few, who are lovers of God. Uncontradicted, I conceive, will rest the observation, that during the course of the last forty or fifty years, that is, since the time when Voltaire completely formed that well-known combination against religion, (for his hostility, I consider, not confined in its consequences to the doctrines of Christianity) there has been a slow, but gradual relaxation among mankind in all their religious and moral duties. The various gradations in society have been always so accustomed to imitate their superiors in life, that it is not at all matter of surprise, that this relaxation should become general. It is not at all matter of surprise, that profligacy, debauchery, and every species of wickedness should prevail, when doctrines of such tendency are propagated, almost systematically; when books and pamphlets, the most loose, immoral, and blasphemous are composed, and not only composed, but published, and the publication avowed; of which

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we have had a recent instance, not by a man compelled to it for subsistence; not by a man drawn from the ignorant and licentious croud in common life; but by a man who has been deemed worthy to be elected “guardian of our laws,” and protector of our morals; by a man, who tells us, that he sits at this moment in the Commons House of Parliament, in the capacity of member.*

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* “But there is one publication of the time, too peculiar and too important to be passed over in a general reprehension. There is nothing with which it may be compared. A legislator in our own parliament, a member of the House of Commons of Great Britain, an elected guardian and defender of the laws, the religion and the good manners of the country, has neither scrupled nor blushed to depict, and to publish to the world the arts of lewd and systematic seduction, and to thrust upon the nation the most open and unqualified blasphemy against the very code and volume of our religion. And all this with his name, style, and title, prefixed to the novel or romance, called ‘The Monk.’ Nay, one of our public theatres has allured the public attention still more to this novel, by a scenic representation of an episode in it, not wholly uninteresting. ‘*O proceres, censure opus est, an haruspice nobis?*’† I consider this as a new species of legislative or state parricide. What is it to the kingdom at large, or what is it to all those whose office it is to maintain truth, and to instruct the rising abilities and hope of

† Juv. Sat. 2.

One assignable cause of the profligacy which prevails in upper life, is the almost constant residence of men of fortune in the metropolis. Their old family mansion is deserted, and perhaps fallen into ruins. The old hospitality, for which this country was once so celebrated, is now lost and gone. The influence of the Nobility and Gentry over their tenantry and inferior neighbours is greatly decayed. And the reason of all this decay, loss, and desertion, is the attachment which they feel to the dissipation of town. For similar conduct, and for similar attachment,

England, that the author of it is a *very young man*? That, forsooth, he is a man of genius and fancy! So much the worse. That there are very poetical descriptions of castles and abbies in this novel! So much the worse again. The novel is *more alluring* on that account. Is this a time to poison the waters of our land in their springs and fountains? Are we to add incitement to incitement, and corruption to corruption, till there neither is, nor can be a return to virtuous action, and to regulated life? Who knows *the age* of this author? I presume, very few. *Who does not know*, that he is a member of parliament? He has told us all so himself. I pretend not to know, whether this be an object of parliamentary animadversion. Prudence may possibly forbid it. But we can feel, that it is an object of moral and of national reprehension, when a senator transgresses, and violates his first duty to his country.”

Pursuits of Literature.

France

France has suffered most wofully. The loss of this influence, we are assured by Mr. Neckar,* contributed greatly to the downfall of the French monarchy, and is attributed by him to the same cause.

Let men of property in England take warning by her mournful example. Let them consider, that by frequent residence upon their estates in their country mansion, and keeping up the old customs of English hospitality; by strictly attending to the discharge of all their religious and moral duties; by relieving the distressed, and contributing to the comforts of the neighbouring poor, they will not only receive the conscious and laudable gratification of "doing good," but will also gain such important ascendancy over their minds, as may, in case of a national convulsion, which one and all ought to deprecate, prove of the most essential service to the state. In the Metropolis, there exist so many temptations to scenes of vice and dissipation, that, when the Master of a family once resigns himself to their force, and becomes depraved, is it at all strange, that

* "On the French Revolution."

his domestic servants should imitate his example, and that on their short, but occasional visits in the country, they should spread the disease of vice in all its various features, and in every possible direction; and should thus corrupt the morality of the whole Kingdom?

Such conduct as this calls most loudly for a Reform; and if its voice be not soon heard, and obeyed, I much fear, that the religious and moral duties of Christianity will soon approach their dissolution. To punish the sins of the nation, the hand of the Almighty is already uplifted against us in the prosecution of the war: and though we have not as yet, like the French, absolutely denied the existence of God, yet we have virtually called in question his attributes, by refusing obedience to his Laws. It becometh us well to consider, with what propriety we can implore the interposition and aid of that Being, whom we daily and hourly insult by our sinful conduct. It becometh us well to consider, that, by the omission of religious and moral duties, many nations of old time have perished, and that it lies in the power of the Almighty to make this nation an addition to the number: that it lies in the power
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of the Almighty to discomfit the most powerful armies, and annihilate the most formidable fleets; and that there is no dependance on human strength.——Let us, therefore, one and all, in every rank and station of life, high and low, rich and poor, renovate the principles of our hearts, that we perish not. Let us individually exclaim in the language of Job, “ Where I have done iniquity, I will do so no more. Till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me. All, which the Lord hath commanded me, will I do.”

By pursuing such a line of conduct, we may reasonably hope, that the divine favour and protection will be extended once more to the inhabitants of this Island. We may reasonably hope, that providential interposition will answer our prayers, will baffle all the malicious efforts of our enemy, and turn the violence of his wrath back upon himself. For much is it to be lamented, that he has displayed in every possible instance, throughout the war, the most implacable animosity against the people of this land. At no long time after its commencement, a decree was proposed, applauded, and ratified by the Convention, to put to the sword

every Englishman, whom the chances of war should throw into their hands. Whether the French army were arrived at that stage of savage barbarity to execute the letter of this most horrid decree, signifies but little to my present purpose. It is enough, that it was proposed, established, and applauded, to prove the malignant spirit, by which they were actuated. The French have told us, indeed, in order to deceive the unwary, that they prosecute the war, not against the people of this country, but against its government only; that the people, whom they truly proclaim to be generous and hospitable, they are desirous of liberating from the shackles of tyranny and oppression; to them they are ready to give the hand of friendship, and all the pretended advantages of that form of government, which they think proper to dignify by the epithets, Equal and Free. But unfortunately for them, this bloody decree bears witness to their falsehood.—My Countrymen! let us not believe their pompous words and benevolent declarations. They have “ language without meaning, phrases to blind the people, and ideas to delude. But when the scheme is accomplished, *and when they obtain the power*, their
language

language is perfectly intelligible.” * The poison of asps is under their lips. Simulation, fraud, and treachery have ever been prominent features in the Gallic character.† They will approach us with the smooth words and smiling countenances of friends; but “when the scheme is accomplished, and *when they obtain the power,*” they will scruple not, assassins like, to run daggers to our hearts. They have drained to the very dregs all their stock of subtilty and artifice to induce the people of this Country to withdraw their confidence in Government, and to imagine, that they suffer the cruelties of tyranny and the misery of oppression. But who ought to be the most competent judges? We can form a pretty accurate opinion of their benevolent intentions from their conduct towards

* Pursuits of Literature.

† “I would observe with great earnestness and affection to my Country, that in all departments of society, government, religion, or literature, the French have all times maintained *one unvarying system of deception*, when under the ancient monarchy, or under the iron tyranny of their new republic. Their manner of reasoning is, and always has been sophistical. We are in perpetual danger of being misled by the appearance of reason. We have always ground for distrust.”

Pursuits of Literature.

those Nations, over which force or treachery has given them an ascendant power. “ We have all seen and felt, *what* the revolutionary principle is. We know, *what* freedom, *what* equality of power among the citizens, what fraternity, what comfort, what happiness, and what security France has offered and given to all countries, who have either bowed voluntarily, or have been subjected to her tyranny. Take Cicero’s expressions. As to themselves; *Licet, quod videtur, publicum judicare; quod judicaverint, vendere.* As to other nations, friend or foe; *Perspici non potest, utrum severitas acerbior, an benignitas quæstuosior sit.*” * We are situated too near Holland not to know, in what manner she has treated the deluded people of that Country. For maintaining her armies, and defraying a great part of the expences incurred by

* “ Such are the words in that elaborate and consummate oration, *on the Agrarian Law*, which every man would do well to read and consider, in the original or in a translation. It is peculiarly pertinent to the present time. For my own part, I would remind my Countrymen, in this perilous and pressing hour, of the eloquent words of Demonax, as they are recorded by Lucian; *Constitutions and doctrines like these, you never will decree, till you have first removed or overthrown THE ALTAR OF MERCY.*”

Pursuits of Literature.

the

the prosecution of the war, she has imposed the most severe contributions, and levied them in a manner the most tyrannical, to which no people, who have but the shade of freedom, would dastardly submit. But, having received the fraternal embrace, and being under the threatening aspect of a powerful army, what could the Dutch do, defenceless, stripped, plundered, having swords brandished over their heads, and bayonets pointed at their breasts? Their internal trade is now stagnant: their foreign commerce annihilated: and their independence, once the glory of this people, and in their assertion and defence of which so much human blood has been shed, is now totally gone.

But the pride and ambition of France rest not here. She has lately presumed to dispose of one Nation,* by transferring it, as a species of property, under the imperial jurisdiction of another;† and has endeavoured, by menaces and intrigues, to subvert the Government of a third,‡ which has shewn her acts of friendship, rather than of hostility, and has ever been celebrated for its independent spirit. These

* Venice.

† Austria.

‡ Switzerland.

things were not done in a corner, but are notorious to the whole world; and were executed at the moment, when she professed the greatest regard for their welfare. She carries the emblems of fraternity and good-will in one hand, and in the other, devastation and the sword.

Such is the line of conduct, which the sons of France pursue towards the inhabitants of the conquered countries, nay even of those countries, with which they consider themselves in alliance! And such is the mode of treatment, which we, my Countrymen! may reasonably expect to receive, should they unfortunately, by any perfidy or misconduct on our part, be able to establish themselves in this island!

If we now direct our attention, for a moment, towards their government, we shall find, I fear, but little to extol, either in the leading objects of their legislature, or in their individual conduct one towards another. That system of Equality, once the fallacious boast of their Country, and by which they certainly meant, at its first promulgation, an equalization of property, upon the principles of which, having practically found themselves unable to act, they have now
 thought

thought proper to abandon, as insupportable; quibbling the sense into an equality of rights. For a time, it undoubtedly operated agreeably to their most sanguine wishes. It proved an effectual inducement with the unthinking part of mankind to assert their principles of Government, and to become profelytes to their cause; foolishly thinking, that by these means they should become richer and happier.

With respect to Liberty, which was another bait thrown out to seduce the unwary, let us inquire into matter of fact, as it stands upon record, and ask, what is the real nature of that liberty, which the French nation has enjoyed almost from the commencement of the Revolution to the present period? Freedom of speech, the Liberty of the press, and Trial by jury, leading objects in the consideration of the National Assembly on its organization after the fall of Despotism, and which are now, and have always been considered, as the Grand Palladium of British freedom, and by professing to establish which after the English model, they paid that part of our constitution the tribute of applause so justly its due, have been violated and refused in several recent instances, known to all
man-

mankind. Some of their most distinguished men, men, who have acted very conspicuous parts in the opposite departments of Peace* and War,† were, not long since, transported to distant and inhospitable regions for *alleged* crimes only, without even the mockery of a trial. Under what point of view can such proceedings be considered by mankind, but that of Despotism the most oppressive and inexorable? And yet, my Countrymen! this is the full amount of that liberty, which has been extolled in the glowing language of high panegyric! But may this, their darling Liberty‡ which they dare to recommend for our acceptance, never reach the British shores! May the people of England possess too much good sense, to exchange the substance for the shadow! Contented with our present form of Government, admirably adapted as it is, to give success to exertion, and security to property,§ formed
for

* Barthelemy.

† Pichegru, &c. &c.

‡ Vide note, page 58.

§ “ We have every thing to lose. We have, under our own form of government, comfort, protection, honour, security, and
happi-

for the wellbeing alike of the poor and of the rich, whose laws are equal, and those laws framed on the principles of Justice and Moderation, with a gradation of ranks in Society, closely connected by a chain of mutual dependence, the poorer part of whose members, when worn out by infirmities, or advanced to a state of decrepitude, are supplied with all the necessaries of life; in which cases of oppression are seldom heard, or heard only to be redressed; with a constitution, thus happily constructed, which has stood the test of ages, universally admired, and, until lately, admired, even by the very people, who have innovated upon all the settled establishments of the world, let us thank the Almighty, that he hath enabled us to preserve to the present day all its leading advantages; that he hath enabled us to oppose, hitherto successfully, the malicious designs of our enemies abroad, and to check the activity of Sedition at home; at a time, when the evil Spirit of Li-

happiness. The price of preserving them is very great; but the price of anarchy, and *inextricable* confusion, would be greater beyond all calculation."

Pursuits of Literature.

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centiousness and Innovation has stalked abroad, has overthrown, or disorganized nearly all the Government of Europe; at a time, when the bonds of good order in society are loosened, civilization as it were barbarised, and neighbouring nations thrown back to a state almost of primæval darkness. It is our interest, our greatest interest, on which indeed depends our existence as an independent nation, to become united among ourselves. By employing the means of defence, which Nature has given us, and our Government has provided, with unanimity and firmness, we may brave the threatened attacks of all our external foes. Vain and ineffectual will prove all their efforts to subjugate the *united* people of this land; united, as people ought to be, who have the good of their country at heart, and who feel it their interest, as well as their duty to oppose the proud invader.

This proposition is so true in its principle, as to be admitted even by the French themselves. Their hopes of success are not founded altogether on their own numbers, or on their skill in the art of war, but on the "Millions," as they say,
of

of Englishmen, whom they affect to believe capable of flocking to their standard, and plunging their swords into the bosom of their country; that country, which possesses the greatest claim on their attachment and their gratitude; that country, which gave them birth, and held forth its fostering hand for their support and protection at an age, when they were incapable of supporting and protecting themselves; that dear Country, wherein dwell all their tender connections, their wives, their children, their fathers, their brethren; all of whom would feel and suffer most wofully from the traiterous wound.

It is a truth, which indeed cannot be lamented in language too pathetic, that they have already so far succeeded in their hostile attempts, as to throw the apple of Discord amongst us. The torch of Sedition has appeared. Inflammatory speeches have been delivered by the Discontented and Ambitious of our own people; by those perturbed Spirits, who can never be at rest, and who would wish to raise themselves to an elevated point of distinction, even upon their Country's ruin. To these causes principally

pally may be ascribed the prolongation of the war. To these causes principally may be attributed the enemy's hopes of success. That inveterate spirit of animosity, which never lied dormant any long period, since we became an independent nation, but over which, with the view of facilitating the execution of their evil designs, they for some time cast a deceptive but thin veil, so far succeeding as to throw a voluntary blindness over the eyes of some of our popular politicians, and to mislead some well-disposed, but incautious people, who are not accustomed to behold things with attention, to judge of actions by continuity, and to develop the various artifices practised by mankind, that inveterate spirit of animosity has been publicly avowed in the proclamation, published not long ago by the French Directory, and in all their declarations and proceedings, since made known. They now boldly throw off the mask. They now openly threaten to plant their tricoloured Standard upon the banks of the Thames, to remove the seat of war, and the whole train of its attendant evils, to our own shores, and to *dictate*, as to *slaves*, terms of peace. What was the general feeling of the English nation upon
reading

reading this proclamation? What, but indignation against the authors of it! The spirit of the British people has never been so insulted, since they first asserted their claim to independence: never, no never! What would be the language of our brave ancestors, the Edwards and Henries of old time, before whose victorious arms the French nation has so often bent its suppliant knees, were it in their power to revisit their native land? What would be their language, but that, which the most indignant emotions could excite? And shall we, the descendants of those very men, who have so often shaken France to the very centre, shall we so far forget our origin and our power, as dastardly to submit to have terms of Peace *dictated* to us by an ambitious and inveterate foe; a foe, whose avowed object it is, to annihilate us, as a nation? Such language is fit to be applied only to the inhabitants of a conquered country, or to slaves, not to Englishmen, whose privilege and whose birthright are freedom and independence.

Much is it to be lamented, that such a spirit of animosity should fill the bosom of our enemy,
and

and that he cannot be prevailed upon to convert his “swords into ploughshares, and his spears into pruning hooks.” Every honourable advance, conducted in a manner, bespeaking the most sincere intentions, has undoubtedly been made by the Government of this Country, to obtain for the people the desirable blessing of Peace; which nothing, but the most insatiable thirst of ambition, or the most implacable hatred,* on the part of the enemy, could prompt him to reject. The Demon of War, he has declared, shall still reign. The current of human blood, with which Europe has been too long deluged, shall still flow. Strange is it to reflect, that mankind consider not the natural calamities of human life to be sufficiently numerous, but they must rush into unnecessary contests to augment them! Strange is it to reflect, that, whilst the hand of Death is daily cutting down, in the natural course of morta-

* “We must remember, that all the leagues of French Factions and their leaders, know not to relent. There is as much mercy in them, to use the phrase of Shakespeare, *as there is milk in a male tiger.*”

lity, thousands of the human race, we must seek to increase the number by the musket and the sword.

But since every endeavour has been exerted without effect by those, who hold the reins of Government over this Kingdom, to obtain a general peace for Europe, let us, on our part, be suspicious of those doctrines, and watchful of those persons, dispersed amongst us by the enemy, which attempt to draw a line of distinction between the Government and the People, and to alienate their attachment to the establishment of their forefathers. We cannot be too vigilant, too active, or too circumspect, at a juncture so momentous, when we are threatened with a most formidable invasion by a proud and haughty adversary, who endeavours to revive between the inhabitants of the two Countries the most implacable animosity of ancient times. “ *Delenda est Carthago*,” is a sentiment, which has been delivered, applauded, echoed, and re-echoed from one extremity of France to the other. But, my Countrymen! let us hold fast together; and we need neither to despond, nor be dismayed at her threats. “ We may have good hope, for we have a good
E cause.

cause.”*—Let us *all*, then, come forward, heart and hand, at this hour of danger. Let us forget all private animosities, the spirit of party, the opposition and struggle of rivalry, and unite in defence of our Country. Let men of property come forward with pecuniary aid. Let men in the lower walks of life volunteer their personal service. Never let it be said, that Englishmen are slow and backward in defending their rights and liberties. Never let it be said, that there exist not upon the shores of Albion, a Manlius, a Camillus, and a Curtius, men, ready to devote themselves for their Country’s welfare. Let the *Ardor Patriæ* burn in every breast, and be the ruling principle of our conduct. Remember, that the object of the war is totally changed: that we are not now contending for the possession of a paltry Island in the West Indies: that we are not now contending for the possession of an insignificant post in America. It is no trivial, or inconsiderable object at stake. It is no less an object, than the possession of our liberties, the possession of our rights, the possession of our property, the possession of every

• Pursuits of Literature.

thing,

thing, which is dear and valuable to Freemen. We are absolutely and literally fighting "*pro aris et focis*." If abuses have insensibly crept into the different departments of Government, let us, at proper time, reform and correct them. Let us not, by our cabals and our disunion,* encourage the enemy to invade and pillage our Country, and overthrow our Constitution. A better was never framed; none more calculated to promote individual comfort, and establish national prosperity.—If our minds are deeply impressed with the truth of these things, let us all, with one accord, manfully stand up in its support. To maintain our independence, and to protect our establishments from the attacks

* "We have *still* resources; but the times never called with so loud and commanding a voice for wisdom, discernment, and integrity, for temperate, and timely, and *gradual* concession with dignity and security, and for an œconomy rigid and undeviating, on *the part of our Governors*; and for obedience, acquiescence under temporary pressure, alacrity in defence, and vigilance, and loyalty, and steadiness, in *all the subjects of this land*. We have no need of the Roman *Armilustrum*: our arms are purified already. Our Soldiers are loyal, and honourable, and without spot. They have been weighed in the balance, and found perfect. And I trust our naval flag will never again wave, but in defiance to our enemies. We are not lost, if we continue firm."

Pursuits of Literature.

of a foreign foe, is characteristic of generosity, of bravery, and of virtue. To fall in their defence, is to die honourably and gloriously.* Such sentiments have obtained in all ages of the world; and will Englishmen first deny the truth of them? Will Englishmen dastardly submit like the slaves of Barbarians, “in fullen silence to tug the oar, and drag the chains of servitude?” Assuredly not. But whither is fled the military ardour of our Ancestors, that we seem to require rousing in the hour of danger. Not to defend our Country, is to desert it. Not to be worthy of Liberty, is to be no longer worthy of life. Shall Great Britain ever become a Province to France? Shall her fine Navy, which has always been her pride and boast, be led, shorn of its honours, and dismantled of all its glory, into the ports of France, and her sons and daughters into bondage?—Forbid it, Heaven!—Blush, Britons, at the thought!—Never shall such disgrace and infamy attach to Old England, whilst she has a

* “*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.*” Hor. lib. 3. car. 2.

“*Pro patria quis bonus dubitet mortem oppetere, si ei sit profuturus?*” Cic. 1. Offic. n. 57.

“*Pro patria mori præclarum est.*” Ad. Attic. lib. 8. epis. 2.

son alive; never, no, never!—Let those, who are able to maintain themselves, serve their country without pay. To individuals, the additional expence will be inconsiderable; but in the present embarrassed state of our finances, the aggregate will fall heavy on the public. It becomes us well to remember, that at the present moment, no less than in the day of battle, our safety depends on individual exertion. By looking one on another, every man expecting of his neighbour voluntary offers of personal service, and voluntary contributions, nothing is done: no offers are made; no contributions are raised. Had not Administration shewn more zeal and activity in defending the country, than has appeared on the part of the people, we should at this moment, most probably have a French Army in the heart of the Kingdom. Never, I believe, were the inhabitants of this land so insensible of the danger, which surrounded them. Never did such criminal slackness appear at an hour, pregnant with great events. The nation, like a sluggish horse, has shewn no inclination to advance one step, without the constant application of the spur. Whence can such criminal inactivity proceed?

Surely

Surely, we do not consider the greatness of the danger. The declared object of the French is, to blot out our name from the independent nations of Europe. Their declared object is, to destroy our Arsenals, to occupy our Sea ports, to possess our Navy, and to pillage our Country. Are we willing to suffer these things? Are we willing to have our property, the saving fruits of our industry, forcibly taken from us, and perhaps ourselves murdered, the chastity of our wives and daughters violated, and our corn and cattle seized for the maintenance of a foreign Army? The Discontented and Ambitious, who are desirous of seeing all the horrors of anarchy and tumult, in hopes of fattening upon the spoil, and raising themselves into greatness, will perhaps tell us, that these are hard times, and that our condition cannot be worse under the Gallic yoke. It is admitted, that the times are hard, the truth of which every man must feel very sensibly; but bad as he may be led to fancy his condition, whenever the French secure a footing in this Island, it will doubtless be infinitely worse, for the labouring poor, as well as for the rich and great.—It is the acknowledged frailty of our nature to be always
uneasy

uneasy and discontented with our present condition, nor are we truly sensible of the comforts we enjoy, until we have lost them. None can so justly estimate the value of liberty, as the man, who has suffered bondage.

The enemy has told us, and will perhaps tell us again, that he is coming to bring us Liberty.* But what greater liberty can we enjoy, than we at present possess? True liberty consists in the power of acting, every man just as his inclinations may prompt him, provided he injure no individual member of society. And this liberty we enjoy in its full extent. Whatever is more than this, is Licentiousness.

Let us not, therefore, be so foolish as to listen to his fawning words, and fair promises. Every man knows, that the great outline of the French character is, as I have before observed, the most consummate craft, simulation, and artifice. And be assured, that after he shall have

* “The French apply the terms, *Equality, Liberty, Fraternity*, &c. for Tyranny, Desolation, Oppression, and Plunder. This is well understood. It would be presumption to enlarge on this subject to a kingdom so enlightened, so dignified, and so prepared as Great Britain.”

succeeded in disuniting and disarming us, he will laugh at our credulity in believing him, and reproach us for our cowardice.

The present moment is so pregnant with great events, and the unremitted attention of Ministry so necessary, to ward the impending dangers, that, however desirous of a Parliamentary Reform, I by no means approve of this as a fit time, to bring forward so important a subject for Legislative deliberation: because I am of opinion, that it will tend to distract the attention of Government, to embarrass their measures, and to create popular dissention, at a time, when there is the most urgent necessity for activity, vigour, and union.

I would not likewise press the necessity of an immediate Reform in our Ecclesiastical establishment, were I not conscious, that the comfortable subsistence of a numerous and useful body of men depends on our adopting such a measure; and that consequences, so doleful, will not flow from it: because the necessity of a reform in this department is admitted even by those, whose interest it is to continue the existing abuses.

But a reformed line of conduct, in regard to
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the fulfilment of religious and moral duties, is indispensable, by every man in this kingdom, from the highest to the lowest. There was never, I believe, a period, when vices of every description prevailed in society so universally, and in such various features. They are not confined solely to the higher, to the lower, or to the middle classes of mankind. In every rank and station, in all the ascending gradations of social life, we behold the same spirit of selfishness, and avarice, and intemperance, and dissipation, and gaming, and irreligion. Even in the days of the great Roman Satyrist, making due allowance to the "*Poetica licentia*," I doubt, that the profligacy of mankind, represented as it is in his plain, strong, and forcible language, exceeded that of the present age.* Little, very little public virtue remains; and that small portion of it, which does sometimes appear, with the novelty of a stranger, contaminated as

* "*Et quando uberior vitiorum copia? Quando
Major avaritiæ patuit sinus? Alea quando
Hos animos? Neque enim loculis comitantibus itur
Ad casum tabulæ, posita sed luditur arca.*"
Omne in præcipiti vitium fletit."

Juv. Sat. 1.

it must be by perpetual contact with the diseased parts of society, will, I fear, soon perish. Our constitution is a fabric, which rests for support, as much on the pillar of Religion and Morality, as on the natural justice of its principles, and its practical advantages.

In defence of this Constitution, and in defence of our Country, let no consideration damp our ardour, or relax our exertions. Let every subordinate concern yield to this one grand national object. Mindful only, that his Country is in danger, it is the duty of every man to come forward in its defence; and a duty, which the voice of Honour, the voice of Gratitude, and the voice of Interest, calls upon him to discharge.

Lastly; should the enemy, powerful as he is, be able to execute his insolent threats of Invasion, let us never, never forget the patriotic language of the late Earl of Chatham, delivered to this effect in the House of Lords, on a memorable debate respecting the American War: Said his Lordship, "Were I an American, as I am an Englishman, and a foreign enemy should dare to set his foot on
the

the shores of my Country, I never would lay down my arms, until I had driven the presumptuous invader from her coasts—never—never—never!”



FEBRUARY 8, 1798.



